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FACTS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE CONDITION OF THE

NEGRO SLAVES

IN

JAMAICA:

WITH

NOTES AND AN APPENDIX.

BY

THOMAS COOPER.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE first part of the present Tract has long been before the public in the pamphlet entitled "*Negro Slavery.*" It consists of a series of statements respecting the *Condition of the Slaves* in JAMAICA, which I authorized the Editor of that work to employ in the manner he has done. My chief view in now sending them forth to the world, accompanied by Notes and an Appendix, is, to take the whole responsibility of them on myself, and thereby to neutralize the attempt which has been made to persuade the public, that I have acted as the mere tool of a party, instead of giving my own report.

In venturing to expose the vices and cruelties of the SLAVE-SYSTEM, I did not expect to escape the animadversions of the Slave-holders ; and I look forward to reiterated abuse and calumny for the steps I have now taken. But I feel the ground on which I stand, and can review the past with an approving conscience.

The clamours and falsehoods of my enemies are worthy of the cause which they are intended to

serve. They seem determined to make some desperate effort for destroying my testimony by blasting my character. Last year, the Editors of several of the *Jamaica Journals* commenced the attack, which a Mr. J. M'QUEEN seems much inclined to follow up in this country. (See his recent work on the *West-India Colonies*, chap. ix.) He states, p. 229, note, that "*The day of exposure will come, and sufficiently early for Mr. Cooper.*" Am I to consider this as a mere threat; or does he really intend to furnish his English readers with a version of that monstrous article in the *Jamaica Royal Gazette*, to which he refers? If he does, he, of course, reckons on the total destruction of my character in the estimation of my fellow-countrymen. I beg, however, to assure him, that I neither fear his threats nor his publications; feeling sufficiently persuaded that I shall be able to satisfy all whose opinion is worth having, that I am become an object of brutal attack for having presumed to tell unpleasant truth in the ears of the oppressors of the unhappy sons of Africa.

T. C.

London, March 29th, 1824.

FACTS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE CONDITION OF THE NEGRO SLAVES IN JAMAICA.

I. EVIDENCE OF THE REV. THOMAS COOPER.

IN the year 1817, Robert Hibbert, Esq. of East Hide, near Luton, Bedfordshire, engaged the Rev. Thomas Cooper to go over to Jamaica, for the express purpose of ascertaining the practicability of improving, by means of religious instruction, the condition of the Negroes on his estate of Georgia, in the parish of Hanover, in that island. With a view to render his task as agreeable as possible, Mr. Cooper was authorized to adopt his own plans of tuition, "*provided they should in no respect be found incompatible with the order and management of the plantation.*" A house was provided for him, pleasantly situated about a mile from the Negro village, and he was made quite independent of the other White people connected with the slaves. He reached the estate on Christmas-day 1817, and continued upon it for upwards of three years, after which he returned to England, where he now resides.

The owner of this estate, who himself resides in England, is, as may be inferred from his proceedings in this very instance, a man of great benevolence. He was at the entire expense of Mr. Cooper's mission, and he seemed disposed to spare no outlay which he thought likely to contribute to its success or the comfort of his slaves, of whom there were about 400 attached to the estate. The estate had formerly been made to produce 400 hogsheads of sugar; but Mr. Hibbert, considering that the labour re-

quired for the production of so large a quantity, pressed too heavily upon his slaves, directed that only 300 hogsheads should be made,* and it is to this moderated scale of employment, and to a gang of Negroes thus favourably circumstanced, in relation to their proprietor, that Mr. Cooper's information refers.

One great obstacle to his success as a religious instructor, which Mr. Cooper had to encounter at the very outset of his undertaking, was this, that the slaves had no time to attend upon him.† This will require a somewhat lengthened explanation, which will serve, at the same time, to throw light incidentally on several material features of the slave system.

The season of crop, in other words, the sugar harvest, commenced about the time of Mr. Cooper's arrival in Jamaica, and continued for about five months. During that period, the general plan is, and that plan was followed on Georgia estate,‡ to begin the manufacture of sugar on Sunday evening, and to continue it generally, without intermission, either day or night, till about midnight of the following Saturday, when the work stops for about eighteen or twenty hours, to commence again on the Sunday evening.§ In order to prevent any interruption of this process during the week, the slaves capable of the labour, are, with some necessary exceptions, divided into two gangs or

* Besides thus curtailing the crop, the cane holes were all ordered to be dug by slaves, hired for the purpose, who also occasionally assisted in doing other work upon the estate.

† See Appendix A.

‡ Since the publication of this part of the present pamphlet, Mr. Hibbert has sent out orders to prevent the sugar-mill, on his estate, being put to work till the Monday morning.

§ By an act of the Jamaica legislature of Dec. 1816, it is forbidden to set the sugar-mills to work before five on Monday morning.

spells, which, besides being both fully occupied in the various occupations of the plantation during the day, are engaged the whole of the night, on alternate nights, in the business of sugar-making.* Their labour, during crop-time, is thus equal to six days and three nights in the week. And in the exaction of this labour, no distinction is made between men and women; both are subjected to the same unvarying rule.

The canes are carried on the backs of mules, or in carts, from the field to the mill. The men employed in this part of the work have no regular time of rest, either night or day. Their task is to keep the mill *regularly supplied with canes*,† and it is only when they have been able, by exertion, to accumulate a quantity there, that they can venture to take rest. It seldom happens that they get a whole night's rest at one time. Besides the alternate night of rest allowed to the other slaves, that portion of them who were not attending the sugar works, had half an hour allowed them to sit down in the field to eat their breakfast, and two hours' further interval of labour allowed them in the middle of the day, generally from one to three. The same allowance of time for breakfast and dinner was continued to the labouring slaves the whole year round.‡

* On many estates the two gangs or spells, instead of alternating the whole of the night, labour half of each night, the one being replaced by the other at midnight.

† "These people are of great responsibility, having under their charge a great portion of the proprietors' capital, much depending on them for their safety; bringing the canes from the field to the mill, *for its constant supply in crop-time.*" See the Jamaica Planter's Guide, by Thomas Roughley, p. 83. Longman and Co. 1823.

‡ The law referred to above, specifies these periods of half an hour and two hours as the proper intervals of labour during the day; and it adds that, except in crop-time, the slaves are not to be obliged to work before five in the morning, or after seven in the evening.

During the five months of crop, therefore, it is pretty evident, that it would have been found "*incompatible with the order and management of the plantation*" to allot any portion of time for religious instruction, unless it were on Sunday.

But here it will be said, that Sunday was the very day on which that instruction might most conveniently and appropriately have been given; and that it could hardly be alleged, with any fairness, that the Negroes had no time to attend to religious instruction, when the middle of that day might have been set apart for the purpose. To this arrangement, however, Mr. Cooper found there were insuperable objections. In the first place, the persons who had been toiling for six days and three nights in the preceding week, many of whom had continued that toil till past midnight on Saturday, could not be expected voluntarily to assemble, at a very early hour, to listen to lessons which they had not learned to appreciate. In the next place, Sunday was the *only* day which was allowed them, during the five months of crop, for the discharge of every duty which they might owe themselves and families, for cultivating their provision-grounds, for bringing thence the food requisite for their sustenance during the week, and for going to market.

It may not be generally understood, that not only is Sunday a market-day in Jamaica, but that, for the Negroes, whether as venders of the fruit or vegetables or poultry or other articles of food they may have to dispose of, or as purchasers of the little necessities or comforts they may wish to buy in return, *Sunday is the only market day. Such, however, is the fact.*

The distance of the place of market, varying from one to five, ten, and even more miles, and which must be twice traversed by such slaves as go to it, and who have generally

heavy loads to carry thither, tends further, independently of the time required for their sales and purchases, to abridge the hours which could, by any possibility, be given to religious worship on the Sunday.

It is some labour even to fetch on that day from their provision-grounds the plantains, or yams, or eddoes, or other food which they may require, to feed themselves and any children they may have, during the succeeding week; a labour which is often aggravated by the distance of those provision-grounds from the homestall of the plantation,—a distance often extending to six, and sometimes even to ten miles.* The distance of the provision-grounds on Georgia estate was about three miles from the Negro village, which was thought moderate. Still the very walk thither and back was sufficient to diminish, by two hours, the brief respite from plantation-labour which Sunday afforded to the slaves.

But besides these different uses to which the Sunday was necessarily appropriated, there remained another of a still more engrossing nature. Sunday was *the only day † which was allowed to the slaves, during crop, for attending market*

* It very frequently happens that it is ten or more miles from the Negro grounds to the market, although their houses may not be above half, or less than half, that distance. The houses are always near the manufactory, but the provision-grounds at the back of the estate. Hence these grounds on Georgia were seven or eight miles from the market, though not more than three or four from the Negro village. I have been informed, by planters, that in some parts of Jamaica the slaves have what are called shell-blow-grounds, that is, small patches of land near their dwellings, in which they may, if disposed, work an hour in the middle of the day after the shell blows for them to leave work and go to dinner. A large conch-shell is generally sounded as a signal for going to and leaving the field.

† I remember only one instance of the slaves being allowed a day for their own use during crop.

*and cultivating and keeping in order their provision-grounds, from which provision-grounds they derived their sole means of subsistence, if we except a weekly allowance of seven or eight herrings to each adult, and half that number to each child, and a small present of a few pounds of salt-fish at Christmas. If, therefore, they neglected to employ in their provision-grounds a sufficient portion of the Sunday to secure to them an adequate supply of food, they might be reduced to absolute want; and although the want might be supplied, yet the neglect would not fail to be punished.**

When all these circumstances are weighed, we shall have no difficulty in comprehending how it was that Mr. Cooper, during the first five or six months of his residence on Georgia estate, could find no time for the religious instruction of the slaves, which was *compatible with its order and management.*

Nor was their case, as far as Mr. Cooper could ascertain, in this respect, on Mr. Hibbert's estate, at all peculiar. It was the common lot of the plantation-slaves, generally, throughout the island.

Crop-time, however, lasted only for four or five months of the year. How did Mr. Cooper succeed during the remaining months? During those months, as well as during crop-time, the Sunday being applied, in the case of the slaves, to the various secular objects already mentioned, but chiefly, and above all, to the cultivation of their provision-grounds, which were the allotted source of subsistence for themselves and their families while engaged in the

* One method of punishing neglect of this kind is to form the delinquents into a gang, called a jobbing gang, and to compel them, by means of a driver, to cultivate provisions, on a spot of ground set apart for the purpose, adequate to their support. Thus the overseer is sure of having the Sunday, what he would term, properly employed, the Negroes being made in spite of their indolence, to support themselves.

weekly labours of the plantation, it was felt to be impossible to require that a portion of it should be given to attendance on religious instruction, at least unless an equivalent portion of time had been given them during the week for the purpose of cultivating their grounds. But, even then, to have enforced such attendance on the Sunday would have proved a grievous imposition. It would have operated as an interdict from attending market, on the only day on which there was any market to attend. Under these circumstances, even Mr. Cooper was forced to admit that it would have been the greatest cruelty to compel the slaves to attend divine worship on Sundays.

But it may be asked, whether no time, except Sunday, is given to the slaves for the raising of food? The law of the island requires that one day in a fortnight,* except during the time of crop, should be allowed to the slaves, *exclusive of Sunday*, for cultivating their provision-grounds; and by the Consolidated Slave Law, passed in Dec. 1816, it is provided, that the days so-given shall amount to not less than 26 in the course of the year, being a very important improvement, not more than about 14 to 16 days having been previously allotted to them by law.

As this time, however, had been given them for the express purpose of raising their food, it would have been unjust to the slaves, and would have placed both religion and its minister in an odious light, had any part of it been

* It should be borne in mind, that although the time which is allowed to the slaves amounts to a day in a fortnight, the year round, yet they do not receive it by being permitted to go to their grounds every other Saturday. In crop-time, every day in the week, and sometimes part of the Sunday, is devoted to the work of the estate. But immediately after crop, they are allowed every Saturday for some weeks, and then every other Saturday, till they have had their twenty-six days. The convenience of the estate is always first consulted.

authoritatively diverted from its original destination, with a view to attendance upon him. Accordingly, it was agreed that, out of crop, an afternoon every fortnight should be allowed for religious worship and instruction. Mr. Cooper had thus an opportunity of preaching to the slaves about ten or eleven times in the year. But the moment crop began, there was an entire cessation for five or six months of all meetings of the kind.

After remaining in this unsatisfactory state for upwards of three years, Mr. Cooper, as has been already remarked, quitted Jamaica and returned to Great Britain. He justly observes, that it could, perhaps, hardly be expected that he should have consented to consume his time amongst a people to whom he could preach but so very few times in the year.

Having thus made our readers in some measure acquainted with the respectable witness to whose testimony we mean in the first instance to refer them, we shall now proceed to adduce his further evidence, both as it respects the particular estate on which he resided, and the condition of the slaves generally in the island. When the statements are general, they are to be considered as comprehending Georgia, unless that estate be particularly excepted.

1. *State of Morals and Religion.*

This, Mr. Cooper states, is as bad as can well be imagined, both among Whites and Blacks.* With scarcely any exceptions, all of the former description, whether residing on the plantations or otherwise, live in a state of open and avowed concubinage with Black or Coloured women. The general profligacy, in this respect, is per-

* See Appendix B.

fectly notorious and undisguised; and one effect of it is, that the young women on estates, instead of becoming mothers of children, are at an early age made the mere instruments of licentious gratification. It is well known that the morals of nineteen out of twenty White men are ruined before they have been a month in the island. They get into habits of debauchery, and every idea of religion vanishes. Mr. Cooper does not recollect to have seen a single White man there who shewed any serious concern about religion, excepting some Missionaries.

There is no regular marriage instituted amongst the slaves; * indeed, the women will say they would not be such fools as to consent to be confined to one man: their engagements, therefore, are merely temporary, and are not considered as at all binding. Mr. Cooper never heard of any attempt, by agreement between masters, to bring together on the same plantation a man and his nominal wife who lived on different plantations. Nor could it in general be of any very great use to do so, while there is no such thing among them as a marriage tie.

It is, doubtless, in part owing to this cause, and to the universal profligacy of manners prevailing among Blacks and Whites, that the Negroes in Jamaica are a very unprolific race: not that they are so naturally, but they are made so by the brutalizing and demoralizing system of government under which they live, which is notoriously most unfriendly to the production of life, and, in several ways, tends directly to its destruction. Among other things, it causes the women to be extremely careless of themselves when breeding, so that miscarriages are very common; and it produces also the most miserable neglect of their children.

* See Appendix C.

The Negroes on Georgia estate do not keep up their numbers. There were in one year only seven births, though the whole population is about four hundred. Mr. Cooper attributes this non-increase to their morally degraded condition, to prostitution and its various consequences, including disease, to hard work, and to severity of punishment. Indeed, he considers that having no other motive to exertion in their present state, they would not work at all, were it not that neglect would be visited with severe punishment.*

In Jamaica, the slaves are scarcely ever taught to read.†

In every parish there is a rector, who, generally speaking, preaches every Sunday morning at the parish church; and a curate, who has a chapel. The service, however, takes place at the very time which may be called high change at the Negro market. Mr. Cooper, when he attended church, may have seen twenty or thirty Negroes there, (whether slaves or free he could not say,) and probably about a dozen Whites. The greater part of the congregation consisted of free Mulattoes.‡ The regular church service was read, and a sermon preached, which, however, was not at all adapted to the Blacks. It is required by law that there should be service in the afternoon, after market should be over, to suit the time of Negroes, when all who might

* This opinion I have heard repeatedly and strongly declared by persons who have spent many years in Jamaica in the management of slaves.

† I never knew but two slaves who could read, with the exception of those I taught myself, and the knowledge which these two had of the art, was miserably deficient.

‡ "In the towns a more genteel society is to be found than on the plantations; but the state of morals is much the same; and, as to the respect paid to religion, it will be sufficient to say, that, with a very few exceptions, the congregations in the churches consist usually of a few white ladies and a respectable proportion of free people of colour and blacks." Stewart's View, p. 182.

attend should be catechized: but this had not been done in the parish of Hanover, and, he believes, not in the adjoining parishes, excepting for a short time at first. It may have dropped in consequence of the non-attendance of the Negroes.

To obviate the complaint that had been made in England of the want of Christian instruction for the slaves, an act was passed instituting a curacy in each parish, expressly for their benefit. The act states, that the curate shall appropriate two days in every week to go to some one or other of the estates in rotation, and there to perform the duties of his office, and to instruct all slaves willing to be instructed, *provided the consent of the person in possession of the estate be first obtained.* In consequence of the necessity of obtaining this consent, Mr. Cooper was informed by the curate of Hanover parish, that he might apply to ten estates before he got leave to preach on one. These applications had a reference only to week-days; for it would have been cruel to compel the attendance of the slaves at worship on Sunday. Both the rector and curate of Hanover parish said (and the same was true of the adjoining parishes), that they were of no use to the slaves as instructors,* and that,

* "The curates were appointed a few years ago by an Act of the Legislature. Their salary is £500 currency, but they have no other emolument from their curacies. The ostensible object of their appointment was, that they should preach to and instruct the slaves in the Christian religion—an object which, from whatever cause, has been rendered, in a great measure, abortive. Either the curates are lukewarm in the cause, or the planters do not wish the time and attention of their slaves to be occupied by religious discussions,—or, which is most probable, both of these causes have operated to render the intentions of the Legislature nugatory. *As it is, the curates have diminished into mere assistants to the rectors, who were, before their appointment, fully able to perform all their clerical duties.* By a law of some standing in the island, the rectors are required to set apart two hours of every Sunday to the

under existing circumstances, it was impossible they should. And as for the Curates' Act, it was generally held there to have been passed for the satisfaction of England, and not for any good it was likely to produce.

The character given by Mr. Cooper of the slaves, is such as might be expected to be formed by a state of oppression and degradation such as theirs, and in the total absence of all intellectual or moral and religious culture. He represents them as addicted to thieving; but he adds, that to this vice, in some cases, they are strongly tempted, by the unreasonable conduct of the planters themselves. These generally refuse to sell any of their sugar in the island; the consequence is, that those who are not sugar planters can procure it only in a concealed and smuggled way, in the Negro market, where it is all *known* to be stolen sugar. Mr. Cooper, who refused to buy any such, was obliged to tell the attorney of Georgia, that if he would not allow him to have some sugar on the estate, he must send to London for it.

The following passage we give entire. It is taken from a letter of Mr. Cooper's in the *Monthly Repository* of 1822, pp. 494, 495 :

"Liberty seems evidently to be the natural right of every human being. Why not then admit of their being prepared for the enjoyment of privileges which cannot be held from them without acting contrary to the sacred laws of truth and justice? The planters, however, are not the only per-

religious instruction of the slaves; but this law is very little attended to. The truth is, that, however willing the rectors might be to perform this duty, very few of the slaves have it in their power to attend church; they are either in attendance on their owners, or their time is occupied in necessary attention to their own affairs; for *Sunday is not a day of rest and relaxation to the plantation-slave; he must work on that day or starve.*"
—Stewart's View, pp. 150, 151.

sons with whom I would remonstrate upon this subject; for all who indulge in the consumption of West-India produce, or contribute in any way to the maintenance of the present order of things in our sugar-islands, ought in common fairness to bear their share of the blame. With what propriety can a consumer of *rum* or *sugar* cast a stone at the *cultivator* of the sweet cane? The Negro is the injured individual; he is robbed of his liberty, and, with that, of every thing that can render a rational existence desirable. He is denied all the advantages of education, condemned to the vilest ignorance, lest, by becoming informed, he should discover and seek to remove the cause of all his unmerited misfortunes. He cannot marry, and is thereby not merely tempted, but in a manner compelled, to form the loosest and most disgusting connexions. I would appeal to the common discernment and feelings of mankind, whether marriage can exist where a *third* person has it in his power to step in and disannul the holy league! Now, every one knows that this is virtually the case with respect to the slaves in the West Indies. The connexions which they form do not always take place between individuals belonging to the same proprietor; in numerous instances they are the property of different masters. But it is no uncommon thing for the inhabitants of one plantation or settlement to be removed to another, situated perhaps on the opposite side of the island; and consequently, in all such cases, husbands, wives, and children, belonging to other gangs, are, contrary no doubt to the wishes of the respective masters, left behind. Others again are seized, and sold to pay the debts of their owners. These evils might be removed by attaching them to the soil, but then others would remain of a nature almost equally formidable. Every slave being compelled, under pain of corporal punishment, to yield implicit obedience to the will of the master,

the wife as well as the husband would be under the necessity of joining a gang under the command of a driver, and, in case of not giving him satisfaction, to submit to the most degrading chastisement administered in the most indecent manner. I have known them point to things of this description, for the purpose of shewing that it is impossible for them to marry. Over their children it is obvious that they could have no authority resembling that which parents in a free country possess: they could only leave them the same wretched inheritance which they received from their ancestors. Hence, those who have children are generally careless in respect to the habits they form, and the lives they lead. They know they can never sink lower in the scale of society than they already find themselves placed, and they have no hope of rising. A regular line of orderly conduct may save them from the lash, but it can effect no radical change in their condition. The highest office to which they can ever aspire is that of a DRIVER,—an office which no one, not destitute of every manly and generous feeling, could wish to hold. In short, they have nothing to gain and nothing to lose; they have no character at stake; a good name, which Solomon says, ‘is rather to be chosen than great riches,’ is of no avail to them. Their worth is estimated by the strength of their bodies, and the talent and disposition to perform their masters’ work. The greatest villain, therefore, in a moral respect, may be, and sometimes is, the most valuable slave; the natural consequence of all which is, that the Negroes, as a people, are as destitute of correct morality as they are of liberty. Chastity is utterly out of the question amongst the whole tribe, and both men and women are found to vindicate as innocent, practices which it is scarcely allowable to name amongst Christians. This is followed by low cunning and contempt of truth, a determined resolution to steal, and

the greatest aversion to every species of labour. Gratitude, affection, fidelity, activity, and courage, make no part of the character of the West-India slave; and yet thousands and tens of thousands have been '*received into the congregation of Christ's flock, and signed with the sign of the cross,*' &c. &c. I have been present, more than once, at the christening of two or three hundred of them, and repeatedly conversed with persons who have been *thus* regenerated. Need I add, that the whole is a solemn mockery of what the people are exhorted to regard as a Christian rite? No effort whatever, that I could ever learn, is made to prepare them for the ceremony, or, after it is performed, to enforce its design. The poor creatures get a new name, with which they are mightily pleased, and some of them are said to fancy themselves out of the reach of Obeah or withcraft. Within the last few years, it is true, curates have been sent out for the avowed purpose of instructing them in religion; but, it is to be feared, they meet with no adequate success. The Negroes cannot attend on their service on a Sunday; and when I left Jamaica no regulations had been made, or I believe thought of, for allowing them time in the week. These Missionaries are expected to visit several estates every week, for the purpose of preaching to the slaves, if they can obtain leave of the proprietor, or person acting in his place, to do so. But this they very seldom get; on some estates not at all, on others once or twice in the year; so that their presence in the island can be of little importance. I have heard it, indeed, repeatedly declared that the Curates' Act was intended for England, not for Jamaica; and this really appears to me to be viewing the subject in its true light; for it must have been known, before it was passed, that the planters would not allow the slaves any opportunity for attending on their new instructors, and that, consequently, such a law could have no tendency to im-

prove their condition. In a thousand instances the clergy are rather to be pitied than blamed; and I have not the least doubt, that many a curate most deeply laments that ever he crossed the Atlantic."

In a subsequent letter Mr. Cooper observes, that if a man would but "fix on his mind a clear picture of a *master treading on his slave with the feet of despotism*, he would perceive the cruel mockery of the same individual pretending, while in such an attitude, to raise his wretched victim with the hand of mercy." There is, he affirms, among slave-holders generally, "the strongest prejudice to any thing which is in any way calculated to open the minds of their people." "*Ignorance, gross ignorance*," is conceived to be "the grand prop of Negro slavery." Nay, he believes it to be the common opinion in Jamaica, "that the Negroes are an inferior species."

2. General Treatment.

The gaugs always work before the whip,* which is a very weighty and powerful instrument. The driver has it always in his hand, and drives the Negroes, men and women without distinction, as he would drive horses or cattle in a team. Mr. Cooper does not say that he is always using the whip, but it is known to be always present, and ready to be applied to the back or shoulders of any who flag at their work, or lag behind in the line.† The driver,

* See Appendix D.

† In one of his printed letters, in which he is replying to an objection, Mr. Cooper incidentally but very significantly remarks, that "to a Jamaica man" it would be truly astonishing "to learn that the whip was not needed, or that its sound was rarely heard." He is sure at the same time, that the planters of Jamaica "would be glad to throw aside the whip if they saw they could do it with safety."

who is generally a Black man, has the power not only of thus stimulating the slaves under him to exertion, by the application of the whip to their bodies while they are proceeding with their work; but, when he considers any of them to have committed a fault deserving of a more serious notice, he has the power also of prostrating them (*women as well as men*) on the ground, causing them to be held firmly down by other Negroes,* who grasp the hands and legs of their prostrate companion, when he may inflict upon the bare posteriors such a number of lashes as he may deem the fault to have merited; the whole number which he may inflict at one time, without the presence of the overseer, being, by the Slave Act of 1816, limited to ten.

One of the faults which the driver most frequently punishes in this way, is that of coming too late to the field either in the morning or after dinner. Those who arrive after the fixed time are pretty sure to get a few, perhaps five or six lashes. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper, before whose window the scene took place, on one occasion, saw three or four old women come too late; they knew they were to be whipped, and as soon as they came up, threw themselves down on the ground to receive the lashes: some of them received four, others six lashes. These minor punishments, Mr. Cooper says, are very frequent. He believes that seldom a day passes without some occurring; and he has heard of as many as sixty Negroes being flogged in one morning, for being late.

More serious punishments are only inflicted by the authority of the overseer; and the mode of their infliction is usually the same as has been already described. Whether the offender be male or female, precisely the same course

* It is said that, in Demerara and some other places, the offender is not always held down by his or her fellow-slaves, but is, in some instances, tied down to four stakes.

is pursued. The posteriors are made bare,* and the offender is extended prone on the ground, when the driver, with his long and heavy whip, inflicts, under the eye of the overseer, the number of lashes which he may order; each lash, when the skin is tender and not rendered callous by repeated punishments, making an incision on the buttocks, and thirty or forty such lashes leaving them in a lacerated and bleeding state. Even those that have become the most callous, cannot long resist the force of this terrible instrument, when applied by a skilful hand, but become also raw and bloody; indeed, no strength of skin can withstand its reiterated application.

These punishments are inflicted by the overseer WHENEVER HE THINKS THEM TO HAVE BEEN DESERVED. He has no written rules to guide his conduct, nor are the occasions at all defined on which he may exercise the power of punishment. *Its exercise is regulated wholly and solely by his own discretion.* An act of neglect or of disobedience, or even a look or a word supposed to imply insolence, no less than desertion or theft or contumacy, may be thus punished; and they may be, and in a thousand instances are, thus punished, *without trial*, and at the mere pleasure and fiat of the overseer. Doubtless, any slave may, *after having been punished*, complain of his overseer to the attorney of the estate, or to a magistrate; but such complaint often does him more harm than good.†

* It is well known that the Negroes will make a song out of any thing. On one occasion, I listened to a party of old women, boys, and girls, singing the following in our kitchen:

*O massa! O massa! one Monday morning they lay me down,
And give me thirty-nine on my bare rump. O massa! O massa!*

† It makes the overseer jealous of him: sometimes even to inflict an additional punishment. Hence many slaves get weary of complaining to any one.

The law professes to limit the number of lashes which shall be given at one time, to thirty-nine; but neither this law, nor any other which professes to protect the slave, can be of much practical benefit to him; it cannot, under existing circumstances, be enforced. A Negro, especially one who is the slave of an absentee proprietor, may be considered as entirely in the power of the overseer, who is his absolute master, and may be at the same instant his law-giver, accuser, and judge, and may not only award sentence, but order its execution. And supposing him to act unjustly, or even cruelly, he has it in his power to prevent any redress from the law. The evidence of a thousand slaves would avail nothing to his conviction; and, even if there were any disposition in the inferior Whites to inform, or to bear testimony against him, he has only to take care that the infliction does not take place in their presence.

In point of fact, Mr. Cooper believes that the limitation of the number of lashes to thirty-nine is practically disregarded, whenever the overseer thinks the offence deserving of a larger measure of punishment. The information he received on this subject, all went to shew that the law was not attended to.* One overseer told him, that a woman had disobeyed his orders, and he put her in the stocks by way of punishment. She complained to the attorney of this proceeding. He ordered her to be thrown down on the ground, in the customary manner, and thirty-nine lashes were inflicted on her naked posteriors; after which she was raised up, and immediately thrown down again, and received thirty-nine lashes more, applied in the same manner.

The law permits the Negroes to make their complaints to magistrates. In one case, several Negroes went to complain to a magistrate of their want of houses, or proper

* On this point, as on others of a similar nature, I have had the repeated testimony of estates' carpenters, bookkeepers, and overseers.

accommodation. Mr. Cooper saw them, on that occasion, at the magistrate's door. The magistrate, however, told him it would never do to interfere in such matters; for, if they did, there would be no getting on between masters or overseers, and magistrates; and, with respect to these complaints, what he did was to desire them to return home and trust to their master's kindness: and Mr. Cooper thought that, all things considered, he could not well have done otherwise.*

Two women who were pregnant, desired to quit the field during rain, on account of their pregnancy. The overseer refused them permission. They went to complain of this refusal to a magistrate, but were stopped in their way by a neighbouring overseer, and by him thrown into the stocks until he sent them back to their own overseer, who put them again into the stocks on their own estate, and had them flogged. Of this proceeding they complained to the attorney. The attorney was of opinion that the overseer had acted with undue severity; but he considered the women to have been highly to blame for attempting to complain to the magistrate; whereas, he said, they ought in the first instance to have complained to him.

It is common for Negroes, who have been guilty of what is deemed a serious offence, to be worked all day in the field, and, during the intervals of labour, as well as during the whole night, to be confined with their feet fast in the

* On another occasion, I saw a gang of from fifteen to twenty Negroes, who belonged to a small settler in Hanover, come from a magistrate, to whom they had been to complain, that the cloth which they had just received from their master was rotten, and not fit to give to them, or such as the law allowed. They had the cloth with them, and the magistrate confessed that their complaint was just, but he could not interfere in so invidious a matter.—Other cases of this nature might be mentioned.

stocks. In the case of one Negro who was so confined for some weeks, Mrs. Cooper begged hard to obtain a remission of his punishment, but did not succeed. Another Negro, belonging to the estate, was a notorious runaway. Being taken, he was flogged in the usual manner, as severely as he well could bear, and then made to work in the field. During the interval of dinner-time he was regularly placed in the stocks, and in them also he was confined the whole night. When the lacerations, produced by the flogging he had received, were sufficiently healed, he was flogged a second time. While the sores were still unhealed, one of the book-keepers told Mr. Cooper that maggots had bred in the lacerated flesh. Mr. Cooper mentioned the circumstance to the attorney, who did not manifest any surprise on hearing it.*

An old African Negro, well known to Mr. and Mrs. Cooper, who appeared to possess a sound and superior mind, and was reckoned the best watchman on the estate, was placed to watch the provision-grounds for the use of the overseer's house. These were robbed, and the robbery being imputed to his neglect, he received a very severe flogging. The old man declared, (Mr. Cooper does not

* Another young man, who had repeatedly been in the woods as a runaway, contrived, the last time he was out, to elude, for many weeks, all who endeavoured to take him. At length, however, he was caught, carried past our door as a prisoner, and soon lodged in the stocks of the estate. This happened on a Sunday, a few weeks before Christmas. The poor fellow was, of course, severely flogged. After this, he was kept in confinement every night, for many weeks together, and at the intervals allowed for meals. At Christmas, he was sent to the workhouse, while the rest were spending the only holiday which was allowed them during the whole year. When he was at work in the field in the day time, he was not only responsible to the driver, but was placed under the eye of another slave, who was considered as his guard. In these circumstances, death came to his relief.

vouch for the truth of the excuse,) that he could not help what had happened, the grounds being too extensive for him to guard them effectually, so that while he was on one side of them, the Negroes could easily steal on the other. This flogging made a great alteration in the old man, and he never seemed well after it. In two or three weeks, another robbery occurring, he received a still more severe flogging than before: One Sunday morning, [Feb. 14, 1819,] while Mr. and Mrs. Cooper were at breakfast, they heard a groaning, and, going to the window, saw this poor man passing along in a state which made Mrs. Cooper shrink back with horror. Mr. Cooper went out to him, and found his posteriors, which were completely exposed, bleeding and much lacerated. He seemed much exhausted. He attempted to explain the case, but was incapable from fatigue and suffering. A Negro boy was standing by; the old man pointed to him, and said, "Massa, him tell you." The poor old man from this time was never well or cheerful, and he soon afterwards died.

Mr. Cooper never saw a Negro, who, when uncovered, did not exhibit marks of violence, that is to say, traces of the whip, on his body.*

It has been already mentioned that the Negroes on this estate, and the same is the case generally throughout the island, have no food beyond a small allowance of salted fish, except what they raise on their own grounds; Sundays, and a certain number of days besides, being allotted for their cultivation.

The Negroes have in general too few houses; but the having a house to themselves, be it ever so bad, gives some feeling of importance. On Georgia there are many houses built in rather a superior style, which have cost the pro-

* An individual who has seen many Negroes uncovered in *Demerara*, declared to me the same thing.

prietor a heavy sum of money; but in general their huts are like sheds. They are made with posts put into the ground. The sides are wattled, some being plastered with mortar, and some not. They are thatched, sometimes shingled. They often have one room to sit in, with one or two for sleeping. They lie on boards, or on a door covered with a mat of their own making, and sometimes a blanket for covering; but they have not all blankets. A woman with children has a blanket, and also the aged men; but many men have none.

3. *Emancipation.*

If the mother be three degrees removed from the Black, her child by a White man is free, and classes, in point of privilege, with Whites.

White men occasionally give freedom to their mistresses and their children. But this, in all cases where the mistress and her children are not the slaves of the White man, must be effected by purchase, and, of course, with the owner's consent. But such purchases cannot be effected when the estate is mortgaged, or the owner is a minor. White men often complain that the owner is not compelled to give freedom to their children on his being paid their value. In all cases where slaves are made free, a bond must be given that they shall not become chargeable to the parish.

Free Blacks and persons of Colour pay all taxes, and perform military duty in the colonial militia, precisely as the Whites. According to the number of Negroes which each planter possesses, he is obliged to have upon his estate a certain number of White persons, or to pay a certain sum for each deficiency. This is with a view to prevent the militia from falling off in numbers. Free people of Colour,

though they are bound to serve in the militia, yet are of no avail in freeing any estate belonging to Whites, on which they may be employed, from this penalty. Indeed, from the prejudice existing against them in the minds of the Whites, it is in very few cases that they are so employed; which, considering the perfect competency of many of them, they feel to be a great hardship. So far, indeed, are they from being encouraged in Jamaica, that their increase is viewed with apprehension, as adding to the danger of insurrection. Much jealousy is entertained of them, especially when they have been educated in England, where they have been treated as men, and on a footing of equality with their White brethren. And yet Mr. Cooper is fully of opinion, and in that opinion we entirely concur, that "*the principle of gradual emancipation*," though the subject of so much alarm to West Indians, affords the best means of remedying the evils of the system, with safety to the master and the slave.

It is a strong proof of the degrading light in which free persons of Colour are viewed by the Whites, that these last never introduce even their own children into company.* It was thought a very extraordinary thing, on one occasion, to see a father riding in a gig with his own Coloured daughter.

* Some time after I had been in the island, I was invited by a Brown man to attend the christening of his child. He informed me, that the ceremony would take place at his father's house, which was within sight of my own, and that he expected a number of White gentlemen to be present. I accepted the invitation, and, when the morning came, accompanied the rector to the old gentleman's residence. When we arrived, a considerable part of the company had assembled. We were directed to take our seats at the upper part of the room: the Brown people, of whom many were present, remained below. In a short time, all the White gentlemen who were expected arrived, and we were all treated as a superior race of beings. The Browns were far above most

Coloured persons reputed to be children of the owners of the estates, are sometimes held as slaves upon them, and have been even sold along with them.

Many of the free Negroes are industrious, and succeed very well, although they never think of hiring themselves to the planters to work in the field. It could not, indeed, be expected that they should submit to the degradation of working under the lash. They are objects of great respect to the slaves, but are kept at a distance by the free Browns, who consider themselves as rising in rank as they approach to the colour of Whites.

of us in fortune, and some of them had been educated, in a very respectable manner, in Great Britain. They, however, did not attempt to assume any thing like a footing of equality with their White superiors. They seemed gratified and flattered by any attention which was shewn them, and were free to converse with those who would condescend to converse with them. I resolved to look on, and let affairs take their own course.

At length the ceremony of baptizing the child was performed; and here every thing went off in the usual way, as on such occasions. This done, all the Whites sat down to a plentiful and rather elegant repast, called in Jamaica a second breakfast. The table groaned with an ample assortment of the comforts of life, including wines and spirits of several kinds. Some persons at table wished the master of the house to take a seat with us, but he could not be prevailed on to lower our dignity by such an act of familiarity. After the cloth was drawn, the invitation was repeated in still stronger terms, and he at length consented to sit down and take a glass of wine with us. During the whole time, his son, the father of the child which had been christened, waited upon us, just as if he had been our footman. The other Brown people kept at a respectful distance, not attempting to associate with us. The old gentleman felt himself out of his element, and soon rose from his seat and left us to ourselves. After we had taken what we wished for, as many as could, joined in a merry dance for half an hour or so, and then departed. I was a mere spectator, confounded by the novelty of the scene.

After we left, the Brown people commenced their feast, which they kept up for two or three days.

Very great difficulty is experienced by Negroes in obtaining their freedom, even when they are able to pay for it, because those who, by their industry and frugality, have realized the means of purchasing their freedom, and who, therefore, are most worthy of it, and also likely to employ it most beneficially, are the most valuable hands. Mr. Cooper knew three valuable men who wished to purchase their freedom. They had long applied in vain to the agents of the proprietor resident on the spot. They at length, however, obtained their end, by an application to the proprietor himself, then in England. After this, a fourth made many efforts to obtain his freedom by purchase; but they proved unavailing, and he sunk in consequence into a state of despondency, and became of comparatively little value.

The number of Brown slaves, the children of White men, is very considerable. In general, however, they are not employed in the field: Mr. Cooper knew only one estate on which Brown slaves were so employed, viz. Roundhill, in Hanover. They are usually employed as domestics, or taught mechanic arts, as carpenters, coopers, masons, smiths, &c.

4. *Miscellaneous Observations.*

Many of the estates are mortgaged; and estates are frequently sold to pay off the debts upon them. The slaves themselves, too, or a part of them, are often seized for the payment of the master's debts; and this is done without any reference, in a multitude of cases, to family connexions. It is felt by them as a grievous hardship to be separated from their connexions or to be removed from places in which they have long resided: it sometimes produces a species of rebellion; and has been known to occasion the death of many, through the distress of mind which it produces.

Small proprietors often undertake to do work on estates by job, which they employ their slaves to execute.* When they are thus sent to different places, they carry their own provisions with them, and usually sleep on the ground under a tent, all huddled together, though sometimes they are accommodated in the sugar-works of the estate, or by the Negroes of the estate in their houses.

Task-work is very uncommon in Jamaica. It is held to be dangerous to allow the slave much spare time.

If a Negro is deemed to be incorrigible by plantation-discipline, he is often sent to the workhouse of the parish, where he is chained to another Negro, and employed with others, chained in the same manner, two and two, in repairing the roads during the day, being shut up during the night. This punishment is inflicted without the intervention of any magistrate, by the mere desire of the master or overseer, who may protract it for any length of time.

When Negroes are sent out in pursuit of runaways, they are usually armed with a cutlass, and are authorized, in case of resistance, to chop, that is, to cut down the runaway. The Maroons are also encouraged by rewards to take up runaways. They carry fire-arms, and may shoot them if they resist.

There is on every estate what the Negroes call a Hot-house or Hospital, which a medical practitioner is expected to visit once or twice a week. The Negroes have generally a great dislike to being shut up in this Hothouse, where they are separated from the kindness of their friends, and would prefer being in their own houses, even though in a miserable state.

White women, who are owners of slaves, will, in general, without any scruple, order their slaves to be flogged, and

* See Appendix E.

some of them will even stand by to see them stripped bare, and punished in the usual disgusting manner.

Just before Mr. Cooper quitted the island, as he was walking in the streets of Lucea, the port-town of Hanover parish, in company with the captain of the vessel in which he had taken his passage, they saw an old man who appeared to have been recently flogged. He was standing in the public street with his posteriors exposed and bleeding, and yet he seemed to excite no attention whatever from any one but Mr. Cooper and the captain.

Such is the unbiassed testimony of this respectable Christian minister on the subject of Negro slavery, as it exists at the present time in our island of Jamaica. The statements he has made do not consist of instances of cruelty collected in a long series of years, or from different parts of the island; but they refer to one neighbourhood, and mostly to one estate; and that estate, too, not singled out for the harshness or inhumanity of its treatment, but such an estate as would be as likely as any other to have been selected in order to convey the most favourable representation of Negro bondage; being an estate the owner of which is conspicuous for his benevolence, and seems sincerely desirous of sparing no expense to make his slaves as comfortable as circumstances will allow. Do not these facts, therefore, furnish a strong presumption, we will not say against the owners of slaves, but against the system which they administer, as incurably vicious, unless the British Parliament shall interfere to apply a remedy adequate to the occasion, by paving the way for a gradual emancipation, and in the mean time by abating the evils which will otherwise be found to be inseparable from that degrading and disgusting state of society which exists in our West India islands?

The valuable statements of Mr. Cooper appear to us to possess this great recommendation, that they are given (as may be more clearly seen by a perusal of his papers in the Monthly Repository) with an admirable dispassionateness, and without the slightest feeling of irritation towards the planters, whether proprietors or overseers. On the contrary, with a candour that does him the highest honour, he becomes, in some respects, their apologist, attributing the evils which he specifies and deplors, (and in this we entirely concur with him,) mainly to the system they are called to administer, rather than to any particular disposition, on their part, to administer it oppressively, or to abuse the tremendous power they possess. He conceives them to be forced, by circumstances, "to continue to whip on their unwilling gangs, as a postboy does his hacks from mile to mile." What an idea does this single sentence convey of the nature of Negro slavery!

But, after all that can be said in favour of the slaveholders is admitted, we would ask, Is it possible to expect that such power as theirs should not be abused; or that many of the men who possess it, and who are stated to experience little or no controul from divine or human laws, should not be tyrannical, capricious, and cruel? To suppose this, would be to suppose the planters of Jamaica to be angels, and not men.*

* It was at first intended to have omitted the last paragraphs, but, on reviewing them, I found they contained several statements which I was unwilling to cancel.

APPENDIX.

A.

“ One great obstacle to his success as a religious instructor, which Mr. Cooper had to encounter at the very outset of his undertaking, was this, that the slaves had no time to attend upon him.” (Page 2.)

The impartial reader may be fully satisfied that this was actually the case, if he only turns to the foregoing pages from which the above sentence is taken. And here I may add, that no one on the estate expected the Negroes to attend me on a Sunday, or any other day, without time being allowed them for the express purpose. It is, indeed, most evident, that if the Sunday be given for rest and devotion, another day must be set apart for attending the market and the cultivation of their provision-grounds. Thus it appears, that the enormous claims which the master makes on the time of the slaves, effectually puts it out of their power to pay any efficient attention to matters of a spiritual nature.

But this is not all. The demands which the master makes on the time of the slaves are found to affect most materially, in several ways, their near and daily interest. He expects them to work for him, with certain exceptions which we shall soon specify, from day-light in the morning till dark at night. In crop, which lasts at least four months in the year, they are kept up three nights in the week, in the business of sugar-making, without being allowed any additional rest in the day. If we are told, in answer to this, that in this country the miners and colliers work in the night as well as in the day, we reply, that the cases are

not parallel, because the men who are in the pits in the night, rest in the day; whereas the Negro slaves are compelled to work both night and day, and that, too, without any extra fee or reward. In Cornwall, the men who are attached to a mine, are divided into four classes, each class working six hours, and resting eighteen. It is true, they may employ themselves in their gardens, or in some other way, for their own benefit, after the labours of this short day; but they are, at any rate, supposed to be released from the mine at the end of six hours. Let the planter act on this, or some such plan, with his gang, or pay extra wages for extra work, and his slaves will cease to have any very great cause of complaint against night-work. But as things now are, the poor creatures have the greatest reason for dissatisfaction: their natural rest is destroyed, their labour protracted, and their health endangered, for the sole advantage of a master who claims their persons as his lawful property. Even out of crop, they must feel it very difficult to make proper arrangements to secure any thing like domestic comfort, and especially if they happen to have any children; but in crop, the difficulty is very much increased. Let it not be forgotten, that every member of the family above seven years of age, is compelled to be at work in the field all day before the whip, or otherwise employed for the master; and consequently all the duties which are necessary to a well-ordered family, even in a cottage, must be neglected, unless they are performed before sun-rise, or after dark in the evening. This being the undoubted fact, we may be allowed to ask, what the Reverend, humane, and liberal author of the celebrated "*Voice from Jamaica*," can mean by the following passage, in p. 12 of his pamphlet? Descanting on the advantage of the West-Indian slave above the free labourer in this country, he affirms, "that at night *he*" (the slave) "*returns to his family, secure*

of finding them, not cold and hungry, clinging to his knees, and crying for food he cannot give them, but around a good fire, happy and contented as himself; and that in a warm house he passes the night, secure of the same provision for the morrow." Would not the unsuspecting reader of this sentence naturally conclude, that while the father was engaged at his work in the field, the mother and children remained at home, surrounded by all the necessaries, if not the comforts, of life; and that they were at hand, with every preparation to give him a welcome and an affectionate reception on his return in the evening, at the close of his labours? Mr. Bridges will, perhaps, tell me, that I was never in Manchester, and am therefore unable to speak with respect to the condition of the slaves in that parish. But I have been in Hanover, and have no reason to suppose that the Negroes in this parish were peculiarly unfortunate in their condition. On the contrary, I have been assured by persons who have seen as much of Jamaica as himself, that what came under my eye might be regarded as a fair specimen of the character and condition of the slaves in general; and I can assert, from my own personal knowledge of the circumstances of many gangs, that *all* who are capable of work on the estate, including men, women, and children, are, with the exception of the intervals allowed for breakfast and dinner, obliged to be at their master's work from day-light to sun-set. The Negro slave does not, unless his case is much altered since I left the island, return "at night to his family secure of finding them happy and contented." If they all reside upon the same estate, they may sometimes all return from work together, to a dark and comfortless hut; and if they want "a good fire," they must make it; besides providing any other comfort which may be necessary for them before they retire to rest. It is well known that the man often resides on one estate, and she whom

Mr. Bridges would term his wife, on another, so that, if they meet in the evening, they may, and frequently have, many miles to walk at both ends of the day. And who can tell but, in the room of the felicities to which this writer refers, they may have their wounds to dress! Let not this be deemed an uncharitable supposition, when we know that their daily task is performed under the eye and lash of the driver. They may enjoy a supper around a fire; but in that part of the island where I lived, the whole is to be provided by the individual after the day's work is done. But, besides dressing food, there are many things to be done in a family. Washing,* for instance, and keeping the house and yards clean and in a proper state, must occupy time: add to which, the mending and making of clothes, and the attention which even one child calls for, and it will be seen, at once, that the slave must be hard pressed, if he is faithful to himself, his family, and his master. It may not be generally known, that the apparel, with a few exceptions, sent out to the slaves, is not made up ready for wearing;—such, however, is the fact. The master sends the materials, and the slaves make for themselves, or pay some one for making for them. In this country, a woman deservedly obtains a character for industry who can allot a part of her time to some employment, with a view to add to the income, after having properly discharged the duties of a good housewife. The Negress is expected to work in the gang all day, and no one seems to have any idea that any part of her time ought, in reason, to be devoted to the concerns of her household. Here I shall doubt-

* In hot countries, frequent changes of linen are known to be of great importance to health and comfort. It is a very common thing for an able woman to be employed to do nothing else but wash for the overseer. In Kingston, it cost some single gentlemen, as I have been informed, £100 per annum, currency, for washing.

less be told, that all the slaves are allowed every Sunday, besides twenty-six week-days in the year, and two or three days' holiday at Christmas; and that thus they are secure of ample time for the discharge of every domestic and other duty connected with their own comfort. But this cannot, and is not, the case in crop, when the poor creatures have no day but Sunday, and frequently only part of that. Will it be pretended that persons who work, under pain of corporal punishment, three nights and six days in the week, may reasonably be expected to cultivate land, from which they derive the main part of their subsistence, attend market, and discharge every other family duty, on the seventh day? Common sense tells us how the matter must stand. Let the nights which they work in crop-time, be put against the twenty-six days which the law compels the master to allow them in the course of the year for their own use, and it will be found that he is richly rewarded for his boasted humanity. If all things are fairly considered, it will appear, that the time which the slaves are employed for him, will amount to at least six days in the week, the year round; after which they have to procure, by their own labour, the substantials of life, with the exception of their weekly allowance of herrings, and salt-fish at Christmas.

The law and the master seem to suppose, that the Negroes are never to leave the estate, unless it be to attend market, or to do some errand on which they may be sent. But many of them have friends whom they will visit at a great expense of labour. Being of necessity occupied all day, they are obliged to avail themselves of the night, during which season they will walk miles; some to see their wives, as they are called, and others for different purposes. They must, of course, be in the field in time in the morning for work, where they appear under all the disadvantages of persons whose rest has been broken and strength, in a great

measure, exhausted. The natural consequence is, they are sluggish during the day, and can only be got to perform their task by the attention of the driver. This is, no doubt, painful and annoying to the overseer; but it is an evil which springs out of the slave system, and, it is said, causes the loss of many lives. Man will mix with man; if he cannot do it prudently, he will do it imprudently. Confine him all day, and he will, if then at liberty, go at large at night. I have heard the Negroes argue, that when "Massa work is done," they are free, and will not, unless main force be employed, consent always to remain on the estate at night.

If they had proper opportunities for recreation, the evil here complained of might, in a great measure, be remedied, especially if some accommodation could be made for bringing them near their wives.

B.

"*State of Morals and Religion.*" (Page 8.)

What I have published on this head, has given much offence to certain individuals in this country, interested in West-India affairs. My language is undoubtedly strong, yet I see not how I can soften it. Why should not the truth be known? And what I have said is the truth, and nothing but the truth. Others who have reported upon the same subject, have gone quite as far, if not further, than I have done. Mr. Stewart, who resided very many years in Jamaica, and who is certainly no enemy to the planters, declares, in his "*View of the Past and Present State of Jamaica,*" p. 173, that "if slavery and its attendant abuses did not exist there, no great additional improvement in the state of society could be expected, *while the most gross and open licentiousness continues, as at present, to pre-*

*vail among all ranks of the Whites.”** Again, a little lower down in the same page, he says, “*Every unmarried White man, and of every class, has his Black or his Brown mistress, with whom he lives openly; and of so little consequence is this thought, that his White female friends and relations think it no breach of decorum to visit his house, partake of his hospitality, fondle his children, and converse with his housekeeper—as if that conduct which they regarded as disgraceful in their own class, was not so in the female of Colour. The example of a few ladies of a juster way of thinking, has little weight in discountenancing this levelling sort of familiarity. But the most striking proof of the low estimate of moral and religious obligation here, is the fact, that the man who lives in open adultery—that is, who keeps his Black or Brown mistress in the very face of his wife and family, and of the community—has generally as much outward respect shewn him, and is as much countenanced, visited, and received into company, especially if he be a man of some weight and influence in the community, as if he had been guilty of no breach of decency, or dereliction of moral duty.*”—P. 174.

“If a gentleman pays his addresses to a lady, it is not thought necessary, as a homage to her delicacy, to get rid,

* If slavery did not exist in Jamaica, it is hardly to be imagined that its inhabitants would be content, as they now are, to remain the wretched victims of the most odious vices. It is well known that the government of a country has a most important influence on the manners of the people. If the Jamaica people are to become virtuous, they must consent to the destruction of those principles in their colonial government which, it is useless to deny, have a direct tendency to ruin the interests of morality, by creating and keeping up numberless sources of vice. Mr. Stewart seems to blame the people more than he does the system. For my own part, I feel no inclination to shew the system any mercy, while I cannot but pity and make many allowances for its unhappy victims, be they White or Black.

à priori, of his illicit establishment, nor is the lady so *unreasonable* as to expect such a sacrifice: the Brown lady remains in the house till within a few days of the marriage."—P. 175.

Other quotations might be made from this writer to the same purpose, but the above are sufficiently strong, and perfectly true. Even the clergy of Jamaica, in some instances, fall into this horrid impurity of manners, and that, too, without being expelled from their situations in the Church. Many persons in Jamaica seem to think, that the mere circumstance of vice being common, renders the practice of it almost, if not altogether, excusable. The plea is, "I am not worse than my neighbour; I only do that which is common to all classes of the community." Serious attention to religion is out of the question. The man is fallen into the condition of an animal, in more respects than one, and it would be obviously hypocritical in him to make any pretensions to vital godliness. Persons who are received into the best society of the place, speak of having been drunk, and of getting drunk, without, apparently, feeling any sense of shame. All this applies to the Whites; and, if I have any knowledge of my own heart, I have advanced it, not out of any improper motives, but with a view to shew the necessity of some efficient steps being taken to reform the manners of this branch of our fellow-subjects; and to warn parents and others against sending their innocent sons and wards across the Atlantic to be plunged into this dreadful sink of vice and abomination. What fortune can be a sufficient compensation for the loss of health and character?

The demoralizing influence of the slave system ought, surely, to be deemed a most important argument for its destruction, especially when there seems no reason whatever to imagine that it can ever be made to co-exist with true

religion and virtue. The system is, plainly, inherently wicked; and as long as it is allowed to exist, it will prove the fertile source of endless woes and vices. Those who are exposed to its baneful influence, are, in many instances at least, to be pitied rather than blamed. What can we expect of an inexperienced, half-educated youth of eighteen, placed in the way of such tremendous temptations, without a friend to guide and support him? Every day the most indecent sights are brought before his eyes, and the most unhallowed sounds rung in his ears. At first he may feel disgusted, and even indignant, but a little time alters his feelings, and he launches forth to take his fill of enjoyment. The power of example, and the certainty of not being lowered in the estimation of the community of which he is become a member, overpowers his resolution, and he resolves to live like the rest. He fails to report to his friends and relations at home, the whole of what he does and feels; and they flatter themselves that he is rising in the scale of society. Now, those who know otherwise, are bound in honour and duty to speak out; and it is hard that they should be visited with vengeance for their fidelity. Those who see the danger, and, out of some false ideas of delicacy, refuse to give the alarm, justly deserve, and will one day meet with, the disapprobation and contempt of the wise and good. Mr. Stewart has my cordial thanks for the open and undisguised manner in which he has come forward to expose the crying and destructive sins which have doubtless ever been inseparable from that state of bondage which has, for so many years, afflicted the peasantry of our sugar islands. Those who are prepared to look at the case as it really exists, cannot but perceive that Negro-slavery, in many of its features, is directly opposed to the best feelings of the heart, as well as the soundest moral principles: and who will now undertake to prove, that what is morally

wrong, can be politically right? A few individuals may flourish by preying on the blood and sinews of that vast host of miserable beings whom the government allows them to hold in oppression; but it is impossible that they should retain their unnatural and impious hold any longer than they can keep the public in ignorance with regard to the real condition of the slaves.

Mr. Roughley, a professed friend to the existing order of things in the colonies, in his late book on plantership, exhorts overseers not to excite the hatred or jealousy of the slaves "*by lewdness or wicked practices with their wives—a baneful custom,*" he adds; and, it may fairly be concluded, a custom by no means uncommon, or he would never have brought it, even in this incidental manner, before the public. The deed, however, may be committed with impunity; for nothing would, perhaps, sound more odd in the ears of a Jamaica magistrate, than a complaint from a slave in consequence of an affair of this sort. Mr. Roughley is plainly not a person who would have thrown out a hint like the above, without occasion; and, in fact, he has only alluded to what is plainly affirmed, in the most undisguised manner, upon the spot. This has frequently been done to me by different individuals, and I never heard it denied, excepting in this country: and, moreover, it might be stated as a fact, that he who wishes to form a complete idea of the immoral influence of colonial slavery upon society, must not be contented with reading on the subject, but must go and see for himself. Mr. Wilberforce and others have frequently been invited by the West Indians to pay a visit to the West Indies, and especially to Jamaica, on the idea that the result would prove most strikingly to the advantage of their cause. And this might possibly be the case, if he were to content himself with being led from place to place, in a kind of state, to entertainments; but not if he were to turn an estate's

bookkeeper, or fill any other situation which would enable him to take a full and fair view of the system in all its parts and bearings. Should the invitation be repeated, it ought to be accompanied with an assurance that the freest access shall be granted to the Negro houses; to the overseer's establishment; to the gangs in the field; to the patients in the hothouse; to the delinquents in the stocks of the estate and in the workhouse; to the watchmen in their huts; and, above all, to the various floggings which take place, whether on the persons of males or females, old or young. With a view to the thorough examination of the system in all these respects, it might not be unwise for Mr. W., or some of his friends, to take a voyage. But let no one who has taken an active part in favour of the slaves, venture from home without an understanding of this sort, and, I had almost said, without a guarantee for personal safety.

Before I conclude this article, I must say something more respecting the moral condition of the slaves, having already affirmed, that it is "as bad as can well be imagined." I have been assured, on the best authority, that the White men are not more ready to connect themselves with Black or Brown women, than the latter are to receive their unlawful amours. Indeed, they are said to think it an honour to be thus employed. They regard the Whites as a superior species, and are, therefore, flattered by any attentions from them. Hence, in the estimation of their own community, that is to them an honour which, in a moral respect, ought to be viewed with abhorrence. But here, again, it may be fairly asked, whether they are not, in a great degree, objects of pity? Their ignorance must be taken into the account, and also, that it is quite out of their power to enter into the married state. Slavery sinks them beneath the condition of women, and to slavery a great part of their immoralities must be imputed. Persons who pride them-

selves on the superiority of their natures, their liberty, their power, their education, ought to blush for the mean and unmanly advantage which they never fail to take of the helpless and miserable beings whom despotism has thrown into their power. It is painful to dwell on this subject; and nothing but the conviction that the exposure of the evil is necessary to its destruction, could have induced me to bring it, in any shape, before the public. It is a heart-rending and dreadful consideration, that all the females out of a population of nearly three hundred and fifty thousand souls, should become the instruments of licentious gratification. Black as this representation is, it is not blacker than I have often heard given of West-India society by old standards in Jamaica; and it appears to me to be nothing more than what might be expected to flow naturally from the slave system. Mr. Bridges and others may talk about marriage, but I am fearful that holy institution will never, and can never, be established amongst the slaves, without effecting changes in their civil condition which the planters seem determined to prevent. Mock marriage is worse than no marriage at all; and I shall endeavour to shew, in another place, that the marriages which are now said to take place amongst the slaves are precisely of this kind.

The unwillingness of the slaves to work, is proverbial; and how can any one expect them to be industrious? Idle or active, their wages are the same: they have no rational motive for exertion, but, on the contrary, every motive for deceiving the *driver*. Here we have two sources of immorality naturally flowing from the system, viz. idleness and deceit, with, of course, all the evils which usually follow in their train. Little children are taught to deceive as soon as they can speak; and as to the practice of uttering common falsehoods, the Negroes seem to think nothing of it. Stealing from the master is not deemed a crime, and the

only anxiety is to escape the whip. The men go astray as much as the women, and girls of fourteen are said to be common instruments of pleasure. The estate's midwife is employed, as I have been assured, by men who call themselves gentlemen, to be their procuress, and she does her best in the discharge of the hateful duties of her office. Persons on a visit at a friend's house, think it no disgrace to send out for a girl when bed-time arrives, or, which is about the same thing, secure one of the female servants for the night. Here we shall close, at least for the present, what we have to say concerning the immoral influence of colonial bondage on the character of the Whites; and, with regard to the Blacks, we may add, without much fear of contradiction, that laziness, lying, thieving, and concubinage, form some of the most prominent features in their conduct.

C. (Page 9.)

Mr. Bridges, in p. 22 of his "*Voice from Jamaica*," states, that he has, "within the two last years, married one hundred and eighty-seven couples of Negro slaves," in his own parish—the parish of Manchester, Jamaica.

That he met this number of Negro slaves in the church, or some other place, and read the Marriage Service to them, as laid down in the Book of Common Prayer, I am not about to question. I will suppose that he was careful not to omit reading the following parts of that service: "*Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*" "*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.*" Similar sentiments are expressed in the prayers, and a number of references made to the probability of the parties becoming parents. They are solemnly and religiously ex-

horted to "LOVE, COMFORT, and HONOUR" each other, and to keep each other in "sickness and health." After this, they pledge themselves to remain together till DEATH part them ; and the woman promises to obey the man.

Now, I have to ask Mr. Bridges, what reply he would have made, had either of the "hundred and eighty-seven couples" whom he married, addressed him, at the close of the ceremony, to the following effect: "Sir, is our marriage binding in law? And are we to be as completely protected in our adherence to the marriage vow, as any other of his Majesty's subjects?" Would he answer in the affirmative? If so, then might they reply, "That no one, not even the person whom the law recognizes as our master, can, in any way, or on any pretence, part us asunder." Two laws mutually destructive of each other, cannot, in the nature of things, co-exist. If the master retains the power of separating the pair, the marriage tie is, in point of fact, a mere form, and the parties who thought it binding are deceived. The master may not maliciously exercise his power, but the circumstance of its being in his hands, is utterly inconsistent with marriage, properly so called. The answer to slaves, therefore, ought to be, "Yes, your marriage is binding as long as your master lives, unless he, or his creditors, shall think proper to separate you, or you are inclined to part of your own accord." But if the man has one master, and the woman another, which would be far from improbable, the difficulty would be much increased. There is no law, that I am aware of, that forbids the marriage of slaves, neither can I ascertain that there is any to protect them from separation, if they do marry. If I lived in Jamaica, and had a slave who might marry to one belonging to Mr. Bridges, I should be glad to know whether such person would not be liable to be sold at any time for the payment of my debts, without any regard to Mr. Brid-

ges's slave, were I not to meet, in due time, the demands of my creditors? Would the plea be admitted, were I to urge it, "That man, or that woman, whom you wish to sell, cannot be removed unless you sell, at the same time, and to the same individual, another slave, belonging to my neighbour, to whom mine is married? 'Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder'—not even the persons to whom I owe money, and refuse to pay it." Again, if the woman should think proper to leave her husband, what redress could he procure? Could he demand her on finding out the place of her retreat? Or, rather, might she not put him at defiance by simply stating, that she wished to be off the bargain? On the other hand, he might serve her the same with perfect impunity; unless, indeed, the overseer chooses to call in the assistance of the driver. Suppose there be any children, and the husband refuses to contribute towards their support—what more can the mother do than get the father a good flogging, and perhaps not even that? The children are claimed by *her master*, who may have no controul over her husband.

But suppose they retain a proper affection for each other, and a due sense of the nature of the union into which it is supposed they have entered, what will be their feelings when they enter the gang to work, from sun-rise to sun-set, before the lash of the driver? The affectionate husband has there to witness the woman whom he loves urged on to her task by the cart-whip. She may be thrown down on the ground, her person exposed, and her flesh lacerated before his eyes, and he dares not even attempt to defend her. After this, she may be sent to the stocks, and there confined just as long as the overseer thinks proper, and again flogged in the same cruel and indecent manner. Her crime may be simply that of not giving satisfaction to the driver in doing her work, or of not being in the field in time. Should she

escape, for any length of time, the misery we have supposed, her feelings will probably be put on the rack by beholding her husband in the grasp of the tyrant. At any rate, the sound of the whip will be in both their ears all day, and many of their companions will suffer from its incisions. The work must be done, without any regard to this man being a husband, and that woman a wife. Marriage cannot be respected in the gang, and therefore the gang is a most improper place for married people. But it is not only in the character of husband and wife that the poor victims would be here tried, if they were really to marry; they might be parents, and thereby called to see their sons and daughters prostrated on the ground to be belaboured by the cart-whip, and in all other respects treated after the manner of West-Indian slaves. Surely, under such circumstances, marriage would prove a curse, and not a blessing. In Mr. Bridges's parish, slavery must wear a milder form than it does in Hanover, or I am sure it could never be reconciled with the pure, the enlightened, the exalted institution of marriage.

But we have not done yet; we must follow the married pair into their cottage and inquire whether they are there treated and respected as married people. Every man expects to be master of his own house, and to have the authority of a father over his children: they are his offspring, and it is clearly his duty to bring them up with a view to usefulness and happiness, when they shall come to act for themselves. Now in order to this, he must have a fair chance in society: no one must assume and exercise absolute authority over his family. But what is the lot of the slave in this respect? Has he the authority of a parent over his children, or the means of making his cottage the scene of domestic love and happiness? His wife, in the first place, is forced from his roof by day-light in the morning,

to labour in a promiscuous gang of men and women, under the command of a driver, till dark at night. She has no choice, she cannot obey the wishes of her husband; her body, strength, and time, are the property of another, whom she is compelled, at her peril, to obey. The concerns of her family must be, to her, matters of very inferior moment, compared with the work of her owner. He insists on all the prime of her strength being devoted to his business; it is only after the toils, the indecencies, the insults and miseries of a day spent in the gang, that she can think of doing any thing to promote the comfort of her household. The husband is obliged to submit to the same cruel fate, together with the children, if they are at all able to carry a hoe. Domestic enjoyment is, therefore, I must maintain, totally impossible. Let any married couple imagine themselves placed in similar circumstances, and they will soon see that every prospect of household comfort will vanish away. Surely the idea of uniting people in the silken cords of marriage, who may be sold by auction, any day of their lives, and who are driven to work for another, like cattle in a team, is both absurd and cruel. The law places them in the condition of mere animals, and as such it treats them. When they are spoken of as Negro stock, a correct idea is conveyed to the mind. They have just about as much authority over their children as a cow has over her calf. They may feed them and train them up for the use of the estate, and if they should succeed in getting one of them made a driver, they may think themselves fortunate indeed, for in that case he will be advanced to the highest pitch of honour to which a slave can aspire.

It is, no doubt, very easy to go through the marriage ceremony with the slaves, but what is the use of a mere form? Remove the auctioneer, the driver, and the master, from the doors of the Negroes, and I will admit that they

may marry : till then Mr. Bridges may keep adding to his list without conferring any benefit, worth mentioning, either on the poor creatures or society.

Even White people, on estates, find it a most difficult thing to marry.* The majority of the planters would refuse to employ them if they were encumbered with a wife and family. I do not remember that a single married man lived on any of the estates in that part of the island where I resided. Indeed the scenes which usually take place on estates, are such as must be peculiarly shocking to the female mind, unless it has been inured, by previous custom, to all the vices and atrocities of the slave-system. I have very often heard overseers complain that they have not the chance of other men ; they are driven from all good female society ; and as soon as they enter the planting business, feel themselves under the necessity of giving up the idea of ever entering into the conjugal state. And they are certainly to be pitied, though the system which renders this necessary, ought, in proportion, to be abhorred.

D. (Page 16.)

It is very common for West Indians and others, inimical to the abolition of slavery, to deny that the driving system

* "The professional planter, indeed, whether overseer or book-keeper, is in a manner forced, however contrary to his inclinations, to a life of celibacy, unless he is fortunate enough to realize an independency, and at the same time preserve himself from being entangled in less reputable connexions ; for, while still dependent, he would, by preferring the more honourable conjugal state, run the risk of bringing difficulty and want on his wife and children, few attorneys being disposed to employ a man with such an *incumbrance*. A Brown woman, with three or four children, would be no material objection ; but a wife, with or without a family, is an insuperable one. There may be a few, but only a few, who think and act otherwise."—Stewart's View, pp. 190, 191.

is now acted upon, in our sugar colonies, in its full force. The whip is said to be a mere symbol of authority, and not a stimulus to labour. The slaves are affirmed to be fully as well, if not better off, than the working classes of this country, and it is therefore concluded that they can have no just ground of complaint against their masters, or the situation in life in which they are placed. It is admitted that barbarous names are still employed; yet we are expected to believe, that barbarity itself has long been banished from the English possessions in the American Archipelago. The abolitionists are represented as a race of officious fanatics; and some affect to regard them as the greatest enemies of the slaves that the age has produced. They are said to be the implacable enemies and systematic slanderers of the planters, and to be influenced by selfishness, rather than a true regard for the interests of justice and humanity.

But what are the facts of the case? Is it true that the slaves are contented and happy, and not urged on to their work by the force of the whip? I have presumed to declare that the contrary is the case, and I see no ground for withdrawing my declaration, notwithstanding I have reviewed it again and again. It is impossible for me to doubt what I saw with my own eyes, and that hundreds and hundreds of times. I have seen gangs of all sizes, upon various estates, but in every instance attended by a driver with his whip in his hand. Some gangs are followed by two and three drivers: a gang of fifty would not have less than two. These terrific officers are generally selected from the most valuable slaves on the estate, and some estates find it necessary to keep up as many as seven or eight of them. Each one has his whip, and that for use, and not mere appearance. In the field, all the Negroes that I saw, were as completely urged on to their duty by the lash, as any team of horses that runs in the mail. The driver may try the

force of words, but, when they fail, he must, and he does, resort to the whip. Mr. Roughley tells us, (pp. 79, 80, of his *Guide*,) that “the most important personage on the slave population of an estate, is THE HEAD DRIVER. He is seen carrying with him the emblems of his rank and dignity—a polished staff or wand, with prongy crooks on it to lean on, *and a short-handled, tangible whip*; his office combining within itself a power, derived principally from the overseer, of directing all conditions of slaves relative to the precise work he wishes each gang or mechanic to undergo or execute.” In p. 192 of his *View*, Mr. Stewart, describing the situation of an estate’s bookkeeper, tells us, among other things, that “he sees the slaves assembled in gangs in the fields, and *kept to their work by the terror of whips, borne by Black drivers.*” In another part of his work, (p. 106,) where Mr. Roughley is speaking of the children’s gang, he advises that the driveress be “armed with a pliant, serviceable *twig.*” But humane and reasonable as this piece of advice may seem, I never knew an instance in which such a mild treatment of children was observed; yet I have seen many gangs of little boys and girls at work in the field before the driveress, who, however, always had her whip. Women are generally put to drive the children, though I have seen men so employed. Mr. Roughley is the first that ever I heard of as recommending the twig, for field service, in preference to the whip, which, even at this early period, is something more than a mere sign of office, the little victims being doomed to feel, as well as see it. I well remember once riding up to a place where the children’s gang was at work: the overseer, who was with me, thinking that the driver was not sufficiently vigilant, called out, “What are you doing there, Sir? What is the use of your having the whip, unless you make use of it? Attend to them, Sir.”

The poor fellow instantly obeyed, and more than one of the little creatures felt the weight of his instrument. There may be cases, even in this country, where the corporal punishment of children is judicious, if not absolutely necessary; but surely the practice of putting them indiscriminately and constantly into the gang before the cart-whip, savours of barbarity and cruelty. In this way they are, even in the morning of life, degraded from the rank of rational beings, to the condition of cattle in a team: their whole education is committed to the driver, who has himself been brutalized by similar training. What father, deserving the name, could endure the idea of his children coming to such a fate? If any such were known to exist in this country, would not every heart burn with indignation towards him? And would he not be driven out of society as a monster in the shape of man? There is something so revolting in the driving system, that, as long as the planters keep it up, it will be sure to call forth the strongest protest in a country like this, where liberty is the darling attribute of the people. Neither Mr. Stewart nor Mr. Roughley would or could have spoken in the manner they have done of the drivers and their whips, if, like many persons in England, they had regarded the whole as so many relics of ancient custom, and not the real parts of a system which is in daily operation in the colonies. Let it not be forgotten, that the head driver of the latter writer, is the most important personage to be found on a sugar estate, after the overseer. That which is used as a mere form or symbol, can easily be changed or laid aside; and we may rest assured that the planters would lay aside the cart-whip, if they could manage their slaves without it. They know full well, that it is a most objectionable, forbidding instrument, one that will always render their system hateful in the eyes of Englishmen, and open to the

severest animadversions of the true philanthropist. The fact that the whip is retained, is itself a proof that it is used ; for who is prepared to believe, after all that has been said about it, both in and out of Parliament, that it is carried into the field for its own sake, out of veneration for its native loveliness, or as a mere sign of office ? The planters are forward enough to mention any improvement which they make in the management of their slaves ; and they must be aware that the entire abolition of the whip would redound to their honour, in the highest degree, in the estimation of all parties. The drivers, as we have remarked, are commonly taken from the most valuable slaves on the estate, and it is manifest that if they were allowed to exchange the whip for the hoe, their labour would turn to a valuable account in the course of the year. Now, why is not this done ? Plainly because circumstances render it indispensable for them to retain the daily possession and exercise of the former instrument. The system is what we mainly blame, though we cannot wholly acquit its advocates. They undertake to prove that black is white, and are perfectly furious against all who are not convinced by their arguments. They insist, at every turn, on the improvements which, it is said, they have already effected in the condition of the Blacks, and are anxious that the work of amelioration should henceforth be entrusted entirely to their hands. But what, in reality, have they done ? They have not abolished the driving system. The whip is as common on estates as ever it was. The overseer can, and does, imprison whenever he thinks proper, and that without consulting any other person : nay, he goes further—he inflicts corporal punishment of the most degrading and painful kind, without judge or jury, or even condescending to hear a single syllable in defence of the accused. As far

as practice and fact are concerned, his will is law, against which there is no effectual appeal. He judges what crimes ought to be punished, and how much punishment is to be administered. Sometimes he will put the delinquent into the stocks; sometimes give him a flogging; and sometimes try the effect of both together. Sometimes a crime is committed without the offender being detected, and no one comes forward to divulge the secret. The overseer, however, is convinced, in his own mind, that it is known on the estate, and therefore he stops the allowance of fish to the *whole estate's gang* until some one comes forward as an accuser, which generally happens before any very great length of time.

Many of the slave laws may be good, but they certainly are, as a general rule, of no use to the slaves,* whose evi-

* Mr. Stewart tells us, (p. 222 of his *View*,) "It may be truly said, that the treatment of the slave depends, in a great measure, upon the character and temper of his master or manager. How ineffectual," he adds, "to the slave are humane and judicious laws, if a barbarous master or overseer has it in his power to evade them in various ways!" A little further on, speaking of the slave laws, he says, "However beneficent the spirit in which those laws were framed, and however wisely intended to guard against oppression, still, it has been shewn, they are liable to be evaded and violated, in various ways, by persons so disposed." (Ut. sup., pp. 228, 229.) The following, Mr. S. gives as a note, for the express purpose of illustrating the point in question:

"Among other instances of this disregard of the laws, the following remarkable one occurred a few years ago. An overseer, well known as a man of violent and tyrannical temper, was employed by a great attorney on an estate for which he was receiver. His treatment of the slaves was so cruel and oppressive, that, after reiterated and fruitless complaints, numbers of them absconded from the property, and would not return to it, doubtless from a dread of the punishment that awaited them. At length a party of these fugitive slaves formed the desperate and atrocious

dence is of no avail in a court of justice. Even attorneys find it necessary not to rely on the testimony of those who make their complaints to them. They often send them away with a second rebuke, and when they do attend to the poor creatures, they are obliged, male or female, to expose their persons and wounds to these men, in a manner that we can hardly describe here. Sight of this kind are most appalling and touching; yet it is surprising how time reconciles the mind to them. The sound of the whip is so common in the field, that one gets to hear it as a matter of course, and that without any particular observation or feeling. Hence many persons, after a residence of a few years in the colonies, fall into the idea, that the slaves are, on the whole, mildly treated, and that there is really no necessity for making any material alteration in their circumstances. There is something specious in the idea, that the master is the proper person to originate and perfect improvements. But he has been fairly tried, and found wanting. What, we repeat the question, has he accomplished? Not the education of the slaves; for they are now sunk in the grossest ignorance. Not their instruction in the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion; for his neglect in this

design of murdering this man; which purpose they effected, and subsequently suffered death for their crime. *This man had been suffered to hold his situation for many years prior to this catastrophe, notwithstanding that his cruelties were notorious to the whole neighbourhood.* The assassins neither robbed the house, nor molested the wife and child of their victim, though both were in their power. It is but fair to add, that this case was an unusual one."

The practice of committing murder may be, and undoubtedly is, unusual amongst the slaves; but that very many of them are much addicted to running away, the Jamaica newspapers abundantly testify; not to mention the fact, that vast numbers of runaways are never advertised at all.

respect is notorious and proverbial. Has he prepared them for the rights and privileges of citizens? He tells you, No; notwithstanding ages have rolled over his head since he commenced his task, and he even now pleads for ages more, lest, by being precipitate, he should injure the cause of justice and humanity. The real meaning of all this is obvious, especially if we take into the account what every one knows may be accomplished, in a very few years, with a race of people properly treated and properly educated. The slave ought to have been prepared for freedom years ago; and it is plainly the duty of the country to make up for past neglect by future diligence.

In speaking of the hardships of the Negroes in the West Indies, it would be inexcusable to pass over one class of those miserable beings whose fate appears to be peculiarly unfortunate: I allude to those who are the slaves of slaves. It may not be generally known in this country that there are slaves on some estates who are allowed to be slaveholders; such, however, is the case. The instances may not be numerous and I believe they are all quite illegal. I knew of three or four, and have heard of others. While in the island, I had conversation with some of the planters respecting these abuses, but they did not appear to fall in with my ideas of the subject. They said, that for a few of their slaves to possess other slaves as their property, was a privilege to the former, which they did not feel disposed to wrest from their hands; at the same time displaying the utmost indifference with regard to the helpless condition of the latter. Now if the wealthy, humane, and liberal master feel it so difficult to secure to his slaves any thing like contentment and comfort, it is easy to guess what must be the condition of the poor wretches of whom we are speaking, whose owners are what we have described. They are,

indeed, in a forlorn state; the poorest of the poor, trampled on by all, and pitied by none. They are viewed with contempt by the great mass of the slaves, and are entirely in the hands of the most ignorant and grossest of tyrants. They may be beaten and misused in a thousand ways, without the least chance of commiseration or redress. They are by no means sure even of the common privileges which fall to the lot of the slaves of free people, while they are doomed to every species of hardship and the greatest infamy. They are far beneath, in point of situation, the common jobbing slaves, and their case may be said to be without a parallel. It is generally remarked of the ignorant, that they are of all persons, the least fit to be entrusted with power, being almost sure to abuse it. What shall we say, then, of the practice of giving to a brutalized Negro-slave, who is said to be too much like an animal in his mind and manners for being admitted, without much previous training, to the enjoyment of the privileges of man, to usurp absolute dominion over a fellow-creature and a fellow-subject? Here we have the quintessence of the slave system, but which will probably never be destroyed, till the source from whence it springs be dried up. It would, however, be deemed a most invidious task for any one on the spot to interfere; and he would, besides, have scarcely any chance of success. Reformation, even with respect to the greatest abuses, must be commenced in this country, and then urged on the attention of the colonists, if ever any thing effectual is to be accomplished. The slaves will no more give up their slaves, or alter their conduct towards them, than the other slave-holders, unless they are urged into the measure by a power which they cannot resist.

The following statements are printed from notes which were taken of the Facts on the spot, at the time they occurred. They were not originally intended for publication, but are here given in corroboration of what has already appeared.

“As I was reading this morning in the piazza, a young Negro woman came to me to make a complaint; but I could not enter into an examination of her case, as I have nothing to do with the civil condition of the slaves. What her fault was, I am not able to state, but her punishment was certainly great: her back and shoulders were uncovered, (a common practice amongst the Negroes when they are at work,) and while she was in the gang, in this situation, the driver made an attack upon her and gave her some violent cuts with his whip, and lacerated her back in several parts: the poor creature cried, and lamented her hard fate, and said that both the driver and the overseer were guilty of the most cruel acts towards the slaves, and added, while this was the case, it would be in vain to attempt to make them Christians: the bad usage and hard living quite broke their hearts. The driver himself confirmed the fact of this woman’s punishments; and said to me that he was obliged to obey the orders of the overseer, and the people were not to be judges of what they are to do, or of what is right or wrong. But I am myself certain that the woman was very severely punished, for I saw from my own window the driver beating her with his whip as she was in the gang at work, and he certainly struck her with great violence. The wounds which I saw on her back proved that her complaint was just. It should be remembered that the flogging which this woman received, was inflicted while she was at her work, and was not what may be deemed a regular punishment.”

“On one occasion, in the course of conversation with Mr. * * *, a bookkeeper, relative to the condition of the slaves, he, without seeming at all conscious that he was describing the case of an oppressed people, represented their sufferings as being *very* great. He affirmed that they could not be managed without the whip, which was evidently only removing the blame from the overseer to the system; and this, indeed, was nothing more than what, as a general rule, he ought to have done. He added, that a morning seldom passed without four or five offenders on the estate being flogged, and sometimes even forty or fifty. On another occasion I had much conversation with the same individual on the same subject, and his details were truly shocking. He mentioned the case of one man, a runaway, who received *sixty-five* lashes, after which he was put into the stocks: that of another, a young driver, who scarcely ever passed a day without being punished; for the importance of teaching this man vigilance, rendered it necessary to be particularly watchful over his conduct.

“Another driver, he said, gave a young woman a severe flogging out of mere caprice and passion: this coming to the knowledge of the bookkeeper, he gave him about twenty lashes for his crime. Soon after, the overseer came up, and added to the punishment forty or fifty more stripes.”

To end these shocking details, I shall only add the following, communicated to me by the same person. “When the slaves persist in talking at their work, the drivers are ordered to begin at one end of the gang and run to the other, flogging each person as they go. This is found to produce quietness.”

“Went to Lucea, and, on my way, saw the workhouse gang of Negroes mending the roads. These are slaves who have been thrown into the workhouse for different crimes,

but chiefly for running away. They are not kept in close confinement, like culprits in the prisons of England, but employed in hard work, the profits of which go towards their support. While they are at work, they are chained together, in the following manner:—An iron ring is locked round their necks, to which a stout chain is fixed, leading from one slave's neck to that of another, so that two of them are thus fastened together. Males and females are both served in this way. In my way back, I called at the works, and had some conversation with the carpenter of the estate concerning the slaves; and he remarked, that it was very common for the drivers, when they were requested to flog a Negro, to strike the ground in the room of the offender, unless the overseer or some other White person stood by and saw the punishment duly inflicted. He said, that he had known a Negro get a hundred lashes, but, from the cause above stated, he was not at all hurt; and added, that twelve stripes were as much as a man could or ought to bear, if they were properly inflicted. When I observed to him, that persons ought to be careful not to go beyond the law when they punish the slaves, he said, in reply, ‘*But who is going to take any notice of it?*’ This, I am persuaded, is the conduct and feeling of most White people in the island upon the subject of punishing slaves. No White person employed in the sugar-planting business, will inform against another White person who may go beyond the bounds of the law in his conduct to the Negroes. Even many of the magistrates refuse to take the part of a slave who may apply to them for redress, although the magistrates themselves are convinced the slave has been unlawfully punished. This I have heard some of the magistrates say.”

“Went to the works, and had some conversation with the

estate's carpenter; in the course of which he spoke of the punishment of the slaves, and said that he was not himself very fond of punishing them with severity, unless it were on particular occasions; but he added, that he himself had given a Negro a very sharp dressing. He first gave him a dozen, then ordered him to be taken up; but, because the man was impertinent, he downed with him again, and gave him *another dozen*. The Negro was still impertinent, and the carpenter flogged him a third time, and declared he would keep on flogging him till he called out for mercy. At length the poor fellow begged for mercy, and was taken up, and ordered to go to his work, which he did. This man could not, at least according to the carpenter's own account, have received less than 50 lashes."

"A few days ago I had a good deal of conversation with Mr. N., a gentleman who has been in Jamaica four or five years in the capacity of a surgeon. He has been in the habit of visiting patients on many estates, and has enjoyed many other opportunities of forming a judgment of the real state of the slave population in the island; and he confirms what I have often heard before, and long felt reason to suspect, viz., that the slaves in this island are very badly off, and have great cause of complaint against the slave system. He assured me, that he had often known Negroes get many more than thirty-nine lashes at one time, and that he did not believe many overseers did or could pay any regard to the law for regulating the punishment of the slaves."

"Richard Brissett, a free Black man, called upon us for the purpose of inquiring after our welfare, or, to use his own language, '*to tell Massa and Missa how do.*' He informed us, that he was made free from Great-Valley estate by his late master, Richard Brissett, Esq., of whom he

spoke in high terms, as indeed do all the slaves who remember him. This man was reckoned in his day to have been of a very singular character; but, from the universal testimony of his numerous surviving slaves, he was an uncommonly excellent master. I asked black Richard whether he preferred a life of freedom to a life of slavery. He replied, he would rather go naked and be free, than remain a slave and be well dressed. His great objection to vassalage was, the bad treatment that persons in this situation meet with."

"To-day the Rector came to our house and baptized the slaves belonging to the estate. He performed the ceremony in about three hours, and thus upwards of three hundred people were made members of the Christian Church, without, however, understanding any thing of the Christian religion. Many of the people manifested the greatest indifference, and would not, I am convinced, of themselves have come forward to receive baptism; they were told that the minister was ready to christen them, and that they might therefore go to him. About fifty remained at home, and one woman, who brought her children, refused to be baptized herself, and gave as a reason for refusing, that she could not leave off cursing."

E. (Page 27.)

The case of jobbing gangs, is generally far more hard than that of an estate's Negroes. The latter are more secure of their fish, their clothing, and such other things as the law allows them; and where they are the property of wealthy and humane proprietors, they may sometimes re-

ceive additional supplies by way of present. They have seldom any very great distance to go to their work, unless, indeed, on their own days, when the duties of their provision-grounds, demand their attention. The cane field, which is always as near home as possible, is the great scene of their labours. Their work is comparatively regular; they can generally tell, with tolerable exactness, what will be their employment for weeks to come; and their gangs are pretty sure to be composed of the same individuals. The more laborious work of the estate, as in the case of Georgia, is sometimes done for them, and they have a better chance than jobbers of getting home to their huts when the day's toil is over. They are, with some exceptions, better off for provision-grounds, and more sure of time to cultivate them.

Now, jobbers very frequently consist of slaves belonging to different masters, or mistresses: one has a dozen, another seven or eight, and another less; but they are all united under one superintendent, and so form a regular gang. This superintendent is generally the person to whom the greater number belongs, and he has a commission on the labour of the rest, for his trouble in overlooking them. His driver usually takes the whip, and urges on the whole to the performance of their task, he himself visiting them once or twice in the course of the day. Digging cane holes, making and repairing roads, and such like employment, commonly falls to their lot. They may be compared to hackhorses, hired by the planter, to perform the most laborious part of the work of the estate;—work which he finds it politic not to extort from his own animals. Sometimes they are employed near home, which they deem particularly advantageous; at others, sent to a distance of six or seven miles, or more. When this is the case, the

inconvenience which they suffer is great. They are deprived of the few comforts which their own houses would afford them, and exposed to confined and unwholesome lodging at night. In some instances, the overseer allows them to occupy a part of the sugar manufactory; and the estate's Negroes will, not unfrequently, accommodate a few. But the usual way is to make a hut, consisting of one long room, in which men and women, boys and girls, are expected to find every convenience by night as well as by day. To avoid these hardships, some return home once or twice in the week after the day's work is done, thereby adding greatly to their fatigue, risking, and it is said, often losing their health, and sometimes even their lives. Their children are much worse off than the children of others, and they are in peculiar danger of being sold to accommodate the circumstances of their owners. An industrious jobber will expect to make a little fortune out of the labour of his slaves, after which, the common plan is to sell the whole gang, and retire to this country. The great sugar planters are generally the purchasers, by which means they contrive to keep up the numbers on their estates. Many of the slaves, however, by the time they fall into the hands of these new masters, are found to be worn out, not so much by age, as by previous hard work and misusage. Deaths, in consequence become numerous, and the only resource is to buy another gang. In this way the number of jobbers is decreased, and it is supposed that in the course of no very long time, the whole island and the slaves will become the property of, comparatively, a few individuals. Before the abolition of the slave trade, persons with a small capital could go to market and purchase one or two Negroes at a time, and so by degrees, get a pretty good gang. Now, all opportunities of this kind are cut off,

and those who formerly looked to them as so many sources of wealth, have to depend almost entirely on their *own* earnings. This they deem a hardship, and, are therefore, found amongst the foremost of such as visit, with all the vengeance of words, those whose exertions contributed, so eminently, to the destruction of that abominable trade which once disgraced the British navy and the British name. A jobber is not necessarily a hard master; it may be said in his case, as well as in that of the sugar planter, that it is his interest to take care of his slaves. But he has not, in a thousand instances, the means of doing it; he cannot, without offending his employers, avoid exposing the poor creatures to the hardships just mentioned: the evils in most cases arise from the system, and ought to be regarded as so many reasons for its amelioration and ultimate abolition. A jobber is every body's servant, and his slaves are in consequence exposed to new difficulties as often as they change places of work. They have so many to please, that their minds are kept in almost a perpetual state of irritation.

Some few individuals, who have a Negro or two whom they do not want to employ themselves, allow them to go out to work, on their own account, with an understanding that they are to bring home to their owner, on a Saturday night, about ten or twelve shillings currency. This plan is much approved of by the slaves, and it obviously answers the purpose of the master. He gets his profit without any trouble, and the slave is in a manner free, by being left to choose his own work and the time for doing it, provided he makes his payments good with his master. I knew a Brown man who was allowed to act on this plan, and he was so much superior to the other slaves in his appearance, that for some time I took him to be a person of free condition.

The following is Mr. Stewart's account of the slaves belonging to small settlers and jobbers, (pp. 234, 235, of his *View*):

“The slaves belonging to the smaller settlers, and what are called jobbers, are not in general so comfortably situated as those belonging to the estates. This is in part owing to the situation and circumstances of the masters. They do not, in common, possess the means of rendering their slaves so comfortable as the slaves on the plantations, and the poorer and more ignorant are too apt to overwork them and otherwise ill use them. Many of the jobbers living in remote parts of the interior, their slaves have often a considerable distance to travel, once a week, to the places where they are to work, and are deprived, while they remain so far from home, of all the comforts and conveniences of their dwellings; they are also usually employed in the hardest and most disagreeable work of the plantations, it being the policy of those who employ them to save their own slaves as much as possible from such work. The poor jobbing slave thus often deprived of the comforts of a home, has only to depend on the humanity of an overseer, or the kindness of an acquaintance, for a shelter at night and from the inclemency of the weather.”

FINIS.